

"Go deep enough there is music everywhere."—*Carlyle*.

The Minim,

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SIR ARTHUR SULLIVAN.

From a Photo by WALERY, 164 Regent Street, W.

SIR ARTHUR SULLIVAN.

Such a capital little biography of our foremost British composer appeared in our June issue from the pen of our juvenile contributor, Miss Dorothy Morley, that we should waste time by going over the same ground again; and we offer therefore, in lieu of biographical matter, a few reflections which a perusal of these lines suggests.

As in most other cases, Sir Arthur *inherited* musical instincts, and was surrounded by a musical atmosphere from his very birth, as has been the case with nearly all the great musicians—so nearly all, in fact, that the exceptions may be said to prove the rule. The importance of environment on development is by many hardly sufficiently estimated, and though it will not create genius in itself, genius is so largely composed of the reflective and imitative faculties that one's early surroundings have a determining influence on a career of which few are fully aware.

As we have already said elsewhere, although genius and the artistic qualities are created, the direction they take are dependent on circumstances. Oh! that pater- (and mater-) familias could only realise this fact!

Not a little of Sir Arthur's great success as a composer, and, in particular, the remarkable beauty, novelty and delicacy of his orchestration, may fairly be ascribed to his practical familiarity with all the instruments (both string and wind) in a modern band. So many composers have only a theoretical acquaintance with them that although they may reproduce effects already known, yet they cannot or dare not attempt new ones. Consequently Sir Arthur "scores" in more senses than one, whilst others *compile* with a chart of "compasses" handy to their elbow.

But of course one of the greatest reasons for Sir Arthur Sullivan's great success lies in his gifts as a melodist. Not only are his tunes original and spontaneous, smelling less of the lamp probably than those of any other modern composer, but he has a singular appositeness in fitting them to words, be these grave or gay, lively or severe. If any one can at all fitly be described as "the English Offenbach," much more can Sir Arthur be called "the English Schubert," if for no other reason than that each has written some of the most popular songs that have ever been sung,

though in at least one respect Sir Arthur owes nothing to Schubert or indeed any one else. It was until comparatively modern times very rarely that each verse of a song was not set to the same music, whatever the character of the words. Sir Arthur Sullivan was one of the first to depart from this custom, and to exemplify in his highly artistic and original songs the natural affinity between the words and music, so often previously disregarded in that form of art.

Sir Arthur's transcendent powers are equally recognised in his instrumental music. His "In Memoriam" overture and his "Overture di Ballo," however, only make us regret that he has not seen fit to give us more purely orchestral pieces. An announcement of a new symphony from his pen would lead to more excitement than the musical world has for many years experienced—an event only to be paralleled by the interest created by the announcement of Gounod's first Oratorio. What numbers of music lovers would look forward eagerly to playing it in duet form! what quantities of orchestral societies would have it on their desks and on their programmes, too! if it were not too difficult, heaven only knows. If Sir Arthur only would what might he not do for us? A symphony from his pen would probably be epoch-making; in the meantime we will make the most of the new suite he is writing for the Alhambra Ballet.

As a conductor, too, Sir Arthur can afford to give many points to certain self-assertive foreigners. His quiet power extracts quite as much, and in some cases more, in the way of results from his force, than more demonstrative efforts; if persons would only judge music through the ear rather than the eye, however, what a number of quacks would have to stand down!

Sir Arthur Sullivan is not only probably one of the best score readers living, but also an accomplished organist. His charming accompaniments will long be remembered at St. Peter's, Cranley Gardens, where he formerly officiated; though it was a sore trial to some of those who like to look upon an organist as a kind of inferior verger to be patronised or snubbed as occasion offers when they saw him step out of a brougham far better appointed than their own!

— * * * * *

CONCENTRATION.—The power of fixing the attention is the most precious of the intellectual habits. Every man possesses it in some degree, and it will increase the more it is exerted. He who exercises no discipline over himself in this respect acquires

such a volatility of mind, such a vagrancy of imagination, as dooms him to be the sport of every mental vanity; it is impossible such a man should attain true wisdom. Cultivate a habit of concentration.



THE DESCENT OF A DECENT MUSICIAN.

BY WILFRED ESMOND.

Do you remember, I wonder, old "Creamy," as we used to call him, the street fiddler you know, who used to pitch his tent, metaphorically speaking, in a blind alley just off the Royal Exchange? He was a rattling good player, and I used to often puzzle myself how it was that such a capital musician was reduced to such work, for although I daresay the old chap did pretty well for "pieces," yet you would hardly expect to hear Corelli, Bach or de Beriot well played at a street corner. His face and hands were a peculiar pearly white, almost like enamel, and his long, straight hair fell on his shoulders from under his almost napless silk hat. Poor old fellow! he would be about 50 when I first noticed him with his little son, who used to carry round the collecting box while his father played Bach's chaconne for violin alone, and filled up the interval by accompanying the violin pieces on a wheezy portable harmonium. He was a large-eyed little fellow, with clear-cut aquiline features, so clean, but so delicate! I used to hear them nearly every day, and being myself a bit of a musician, I felt a special interest in them. I used often to try to have a few words with one or the other, but rarely succeeded, for as soon as I commenced a conversation the old chap would say, "Now, Harry, I think we'll be off. Good morning, sir"—and hastily packing up their traps they would go. Yet the father's face was not that of a drunkard or criminal, but rather that of a saddened, disappointed and helplessly crushed prematurely worn-out man, whilst the boy was so timid and retiring in his nature that it was impossible to associate him with coarseness of mind or vulgarity of manner.

All at once they disappeared, but some months afterwards I happened to run down to Margate for a day or two, and suddenly met with them, playing on the front to a large crowd. I asked the old man how he was getting on, and he seemed inclined to be more communicative than usual. He told me that the doctors had said that Harry could not live unless he were at the seaside, so they had located themselves at "Merry Margate," and were doing fairly well. I cultivated his acquaintance sedulously for some time, and found him to be a singularly well-informed and well-educated man. At last, after much circumlocution, and as delicately as possible, I ventured to ask him why he did not take up permanent work in preference to depending for a precarious livelihood on voluntary offerings. I told him that I was sure that my uncle, the musical director of the "Gorgeous," would gladly engage him for the next vacancy on my recommendation, and that I would interest myself on his behalf with the greatest pleasure.

"What is his name?" cried the old man.

"Herr Gunelbrandt," I replied, "is his professional name; in private he is known as Richard Moggs."

"Moggs! that is the man to whom I owe my downfall! I should be well off were it not for him!"

Now my uncle is such an amiable jolly fellow that I could not quite swallow this; he would not and could not hurt a fly; and I felt sure either that there was some mistake or that old Creamy was not quite the sort of man I took him for. Uncle Dick was musically a martinet, and very strict with his men, certainly, but I found a great difficulty in believing him unfair or unjust as in thinking Creamy inefficient or unreliable.

"I am sure that there is a mistake somewhere; do let me put it straight!" I said.

"You are very good," the old man replied; "I only wish you could. Come, Harry, let us be off"—the old way of closing the conversation, with which he escaped.

* * * *

Later in the day, when I was returning to my hotel, I met a casual acquaintance, who asked me if I had heard of the dreadful occurrence on the jetty.

"What is it?" I said.

"You remember that old man who used to play the fiddle, and his son? Well, the tide was well up about five o'clock and the boy was fishing. Somehow or another he fell over into the water, and his father immediately jumped in after him, though he could not swim a bit, as events proved. There were several boats about as it happened, and the boy was alive and not much the worse when rescued. The old man was so much exhausted that it was doubtful whether he could live; very probably he is dead by this time."

I immediately sought Creamy's bedside. He looked pretty nearly at his last gasp.

"Do what you can for the boy, sir," he murmured. "I think Richard Moggs might have had pity, I only tried to oblige a pal; if he had not been so hard on me I should never have been brought to this. Why did he not read my letters? It was cruel, cruel to return them unread!" Then the old man sank back, to all appearances dead.

I asked the nurse if anything of value was found on him.

"Only this bundle of letters," she said, "and about five shillings in silver and bronze." On investigation I saw that my poor old friend had indited a number of letters to my uncle, begging to be reinstated in his favour, which had been appar-

ently returned through the dead-letter office through a faulty address. There was also a circumstantial account in full of the whole matter written out in neat, clear writing, and signed by "Robert Raper," evidently old Creamy's real name. This is here given in full as it stands—

"I, Robert Raper, formerly second violin in the Eglantine Theatre, solemnly do here relate the true causes which led up to my dismissal from my post, and to the refusal of Herr Gunelbrandt to give me a character or recommendation, through which I have since been unable to obtain any permanent appointment.

"After rehearsal on the morning of the 28th February last, as I was leaving the theatre, I met at the stage door an old friend whom I had not seen for some little time. He told me he had a great favour to ask me; would I deputise for him at a *matinée* that afternoon? His wife had died suddenly that morning, and he was unable to secure his usual man to take his place. I told him that as I was free I would do so with pleasure, were it not that I could not play his instrument, never having mastered the C clef (he played the tenor). He implored me to go, otherwise he would lose his engagement; he argued that, as the other man was a first-rate player, it would probably never be noticed that I was only "keeping tune" without playing the actual notes, whilst as I was well known to the conductor as one of Gunelbrandt's men, he would accept me without demur. The poor fellow seemed so distressed that I at last weakly consented to chance it, just in order to oblige him; really there would be little damage done, and no one would probably be the wiser, he said, and I knew it had often been done in large bands such as the one MacShane belonged to.

"When we got to our places in the orchestra, I saw that the opening piece was an overture by a French composer, which I had never seen before. It was easy-looking stuff enough though, and if I could only have read it my task was child's play. I tuned my tenor (or rather MacShane's tenor) carefully, and looked anxiously at my companion at the desk. I was a little horrified to find that we were the only two violas in the band, and began to wish I had not come, especially as I found myself much closer to the conductor and in a much smaller band than I had expected.

"The other tenor was evidently a 'professional of professionals'; clean shaven, save for a thick

moustache, and with long curly hair, he carried his following in his face. He took things so coolly and handled his instrument so easily and freely that I felt reassured, and settled myself down comfortably for work (?)."

"Crash, bang went the first chord from the full orchestra. It was one on a pause, and so far so good. Then we had, after two bars rest, a passage in crotchets. I dared not attempt it, for I had not the remotest idea what the note was! It was pretty high up in the leger lines, and, dreadful to relate, the other strings evidently had to rest whilst we did it. The conductor gave us our cue. I had my bow in position, but gave no sound. I waited anxiously for the other man. Nothing happened! He glared at us, uttered maledictions, and sent us complimentary and pleasing messages under his breath. Result—utter silence!

"All at once the horrid truth flashed across me—we were both of us in the same boat; the other man depended on me just as I did on him!

"We shook our heads at the conductor, and weary at length of waiting, he signalled the firsts and seconds, who played the passage from their small 'cue' notes, and the thing was saved somehow!

"We both adjudged discretion the better part of valour, and without more ado we departed quickly from the scene of our sorrows, without waiting to explain ourselves.

"The result of this foolishness was that MacShane lost his berth, and when I turned up next day I was also informed that my services would not be required at the 'Eglantine' after that week, on account of the disgraceful state in which I had presented myself as MacShane's deputy. Gunelbrandt quite thought I was drunk from what his friend told him, and I would rather have died than 'blow' on MacShane. Sometime, perhaps, my character as a drunkard may be retrieved, though I have little hope of it."

* * * * *

Robert Raper did *not* die; my uncle Dick I always said was a good sort, and one to make allowances for the frailties of men, especially when they have a good heart and stand by each other. Both Robert and Harry Raper now are drawing good screws under his *bâton*, and will never more I think be seen near Throgmorton Avenue fiddling for coppers.

—*****—

FRUGALITY is a great revenue.

YOU will never find time for anything; if you want time, you must make it.

BETTER bend the neck than bruise the forehead.

A MAN'S own good-breeding is the best security against other people's ill manners.—*Chesterfield.*

COMIC SONGS.

Nobody looks a much greater idiot than a man after he has told you a "funny" story which doesn't come off. It is vastly better to go to a tragedy at which you can laugh than to a comedy at which you can't. I have many a time done both, and I have come to the conclusion that, like relating a joke, the effect depends more on the way it is done than on the material. "Hamlet" is still Shakespeare, however much it is "mouthed," and Macbeth still remains Macbeth notwithstanding that Banquo's Ghost convulses the house by an untoward accident. The same holds good with many so-called "comic songs;" they are only comic when made so by the singer, just as the Reverend Robert Spalding's "D'you know" in the "Private Secretary" is only comic through its rendering.

Still, for all that, so far as the bourgeois British are concerned, it is rather a good thing to label a piece of music. There is not much danger then of mistaking a comic song for a ballad, as might otherwise easily happen.

Have you ever noticed how eagerly people lay themselves out to extract all the fun possible out of a song announced to be "comic?" They begin to smile even before the singer commences, and probably vociferously and rapturously "encore" him if he acts the "big buffoon," even though they scarcely understand what it is about. In

other words, they are laughing at the singing more than at the song.

It may fairly be said that we have not had a really *comic* song for years. It is true that music-hall singers, who as a rule enunciate their words very clearly, often make a poor song succeed to all appearance on the stage for reasons given above, but the same song is a dead failure when sung by a mediocrity elsewhere.

The test of a really comic song should be that it is really funny (not vulgar or suggestive) if read and *not* sung. If such words were cast in a suitable mould and wedded to a suitable tune, to what extent would not a delighted public respond! Composer, author and singer might become comparative millionaires.

All comic songs are not necessarily bad art, as Sir Arthur Sullivan and A. S. Gatti have conclusively proved, any more than the thousands of mediocre compositions issued annually by those who could not write in a comic vein for a king's ransom are necessarily good art.

Gentle reader, if you are made of the right stuff, a triumph and plenty of ready cash awaits you if you can really make people laugh whether they will or no.

Leaving the songs of Corney Grain and Grosmith out of the question (much the best comic songs we have at present) there is now little competition, so you can no doubt easily go in and win!



ON UNUSUALLY DIFFICULT COMPOSITIONS.

By CARL CZERNY.

(From the "Great Pianoforte School," 1839.)

Difficulties are not the chief end of the art, they are a means only, though an *indispensable* means; for, when ingeniously contrived and properly executed, they produce effects which could not at all be attained by easier, simpler and more convenient assemblages of notes. The labour which we bestow in learning to execute them with ease and beauty is therefore always amply repaid, for even the surprise and admiration which they elicit from the hearer is not to be despised, and it is doubly merited when we also give pleasure by the difficulties thus overcome or even go so far as to excite his sensibility, for one of the two is always possible when the composition is not altogether contemptible.

That a lame execution of difficulties only makes things so much the worse is natural, and the less practised performer must avoid playing all such pieces before others, as certain difficulties which are above his powers, a fault which so many

commit, thereby throwing discredit both on their performance and on the composition, if not spoiling the latter altogether.

Difficulties consist:—

1. In such passages as require great, and, in some cases, almost monstrous rapidity of finger; although, when played slowly, they may not appear so difficult.
2. In skips, extensions, etc., the correct execution of which seems almost to depend on chance.
3. In intricate passages in several parts, runs in thirds, etc.; shakes, chromatic passages, pieces in the fugue style, etc.
4. In long staccato passages, as octaves, etc.; which call for great exertion of physical strength.

In all these the following capital rule may be applied:

Any difficulty sounds well only when it ceases to be a difficulty to the player.

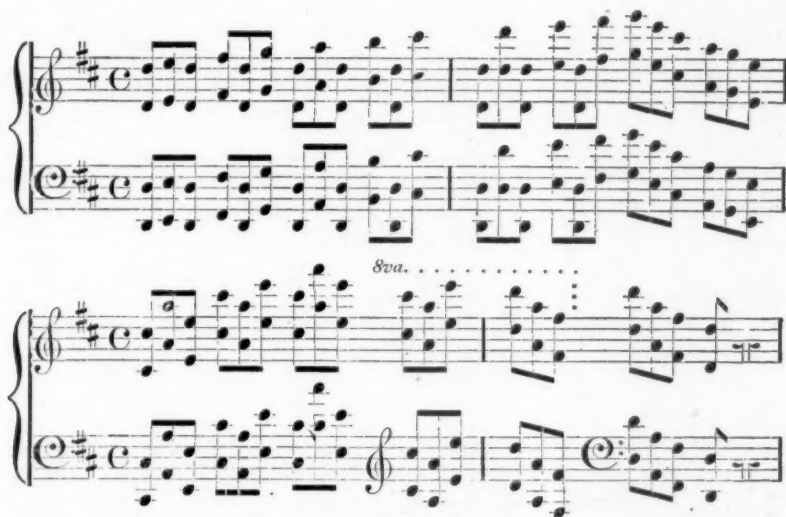
So long as such passages are played laboriously, and with evident disquiet and anxiety, they cannot cause pleasure to others, and the player rather excites our compensation than admiration.

The most important means to render such passages agreeable as appear harsh, overloaded, and dissonant, is *beauty of tone*. Whoever possesses the art of always producing from the pianoforte a beautiful, harmonious and smooth tone; who never carries the forte or fortissimo to a disagreeable and excessive harshness; and, further, who combines the highest degree of volubility with perfect distinctness and clearness, will execute even the most startling assemblage of notes so that they may appear beautiful even to persons unacquainted with music, and give them unfeigned delight.

It is with this as in speaking, where a coarse, noisy voice is capable of injuring the best chosen

expressions, while on the contrary a modest, gentle and tranquil enunciation may even soften down expressions which would otherwise be offensive. Even in the greatest skips we recommend to the player the utmost possible tranquillity of body, but we must also take care to avoid all internal and invisible exertion of the spirits and the nerves, for he who accustoms himself to a quiet and easy pace will travel for miles without fatigue, while he whose step is laboured or who seeks to hide external exertion by an apparently tranquil motion will even in the first quarter of an hour feel himself exhausted. The respiration should always remain free, as otherwise the too great difficulties may even become injurious to the health. After half-an-hour bestowed on a difficult passage we should rest a few minutes, walk about the room, read something, etc.

In such a passage as the following:—



the player may either habituate himself to too great movement of the body, or, in the endeavour to avoid that, he may by an internal exertion, as for example the holding in his breath, easily waste still more strength, even to his own detriment. Let every one in this case consult his own feelings, neither overdoing either the one thing or the other, and we shall at last overcome every difficulty in a graceful and unprejudicial manner.

For it is not to be denied that such difficulties well executed produce extraordinary effects, which great composers, by a judicious application of them, elevate to the degree of critical and unquestionable beauty. Only an injudicious employment or an unnatural performance of them can degrade them to mere trickery and sleight-of-hand. The

staccato is, according to the established rule, much more difficult and laborious than even the smoothest legato. Each difficulty must be played over separately by the student until he is quite sure of it; it is then equally necessary that he should practise it in connection with what precedes and follows it, because this often makes a considerable difference. After this we must repeat it with our attention directed to the proper style of expression, as often as is necessary to give the piece the requisite easy flow of execution.

ON THE EXECUTION OF SLOW PIECES.

The performance of slow pieces as an adagio, andante, grave, etc., is confessedly more difficult than that of quicker kinds of movement, and that

for the following reasons:—The intention of every composition is to excite interest, uninterrupted attention and delight in the hearers; and therefore by no means to weary or annoy them. In quick movements the rapid succession of ideas is often in itself sufficient to fascinate the hearer by their cheerfulness or energy, as also to retain him in the same state of pleasurable excitement by the consequent development of volubility of finger, bravura of style, etc. But such is not the case in the adagio.

When any one speaks very slowly his discourse will in all probability soon become tedious, unless it is made important by its weighty contents, or at least by a correct, appropriate and varied intonation. The same takes place in the performance of an adagio, etc. For here, too, the player must know how to fascinate his audience by the finest possible quality of tone, by correct accentuation and phrasing of the melody, by a pellucid fulness and close connection of the harmonies, by feeling and delicacy, and by the appropriate expression of tender and sublime emotions; and, according to the contents of the composition, operate on their hearts or their misunderstandings.

Many players imagine that feeling and expression consists only in a coarse contrasting of the fortes and pianos, and suppose that they have satisfied everything when they strike certain notes harsh and screaming, and others, on the contrary, dull and feeble. But to a fine and educated ear such a style of performance is unsupportable, and if possible more disagreeable than a monotonous but still soft though completely unexpressive mode of execution.

The observance of the more delicate gradations of touch and tone, the portamento of the notes, the minute gradations from pianissimo through all degrees of crescendo up to forte, this it is by which the player must endeavour to render slow pieces attractive.

There are several species of adagio which require different styles of execution, viz.: That of a sad, thoughtful, or sublime character, replete with intricate harmony, as for example those of Beethoven. Its performance must be dignified and important and quickly progressive, and it must be made intelligible by attentively-given relief to the melody. Example:—



Here, in preference to everything else, we must observe in both hands a strict legato according to the value of the notes. All the parts of each chord must be struck with firmness and energy, and the highest notes in the right hand must be brought out rather prominently because they form the melody. Each ascent or descent in this melody must be expressed by a slight crescendo

and diminuendo. Thus, for example, the second chord in the first bar must be played with a somewhat stronger pressure than the two others. In the second bar the first chord demands this emphasis, because the others follow in descending.

The middle chord in this bar is to be struck more piano, and to be held on till the next begins. The last chord of this bar must be considered

as belonging to the following crescendo, which, however, must not become too loud in the third bar, since in the fourth bar it terminates with a piano instead of a *sf* as usual. The arpeggiated first chord in the fourth bar must not be taken too slowly, because the harmony which serves to resolve this chord is soon to fall on the ear. The following chord must be struck loud, and though the notes are again to be played somewhat diminuendo, yet the crescendo becomes still louder and more marked in the fifth bar, notwithstanding that the melody descends here in a slight

degree, and this must be so perceptible as to introduce the sixth bar with much energy; the seventh bar on the contrary must be played tranquil and soft throughout.

These adagios in the lower parts form a kind of accompaniment, and in which, therefore, the melody of the upper part must predominate. Such slow pieces are mostly of a tender or plaintive character, and therefore do not require to be played with the same weight and dignity as those before spoken of.



RESULT OF PRIZE COMPETITION No. 17.

We are now able to announce the result of this, and the winning list is as follows:—

The most popular—

Overture Tannhäuser
Symphony Pastoral (<i>Beethoven</i>)
Bass Air (Oratorio)	Why do the Nations? (<i>Messiah</i>)
Tenor Air If with all your hearts (<i>Elijah</i>)
Ballad Home, Sweet Home
March Wedding (<i>Mendelssohn</i>)

As a matter of fact Schubert's "Unfinished" tied with Beethoven's "Pastoral," but the former was incorrectly described on three or four coupons as in "B flat" instead of "B minor," consequently "The Pastoral" takes first place.

No Competitor has given the entire list (even with "The Unfinished" in place of "The Pastoral") and we therefore award the prize to the first competitor, whose coupon contained five correct names.

The winner is—

Miss EVELINE MARPLES,
7 Alfred Road,
Birkenhead,

whose coupon bore the motto "Labor omnia

vincit," and to whom a Cheque for One Guinea has been forwarded.

A little more than twelve months back we announced the result of an exactly similar competition, and expressed the opinion that it would be a matter of little surprise if history repeated itself. This is practically what has happened, the only change being the "Ballad" where "Home, Sweet Home" has just ousted "Tom Bowling" this time.

A great many competitors have again sacrificed their chances of success by voting for their own *personal* favourites instead of trying to assess *public* opinion.

The "Toy" Symphony could hardly be expected to vie with the "Pastoral" as a *public* favourite, nor "Her Golden Hair" with "Home, Sweet Home" as a genuine ballad. We are inclined to think our competitor intended some other title, otherwise the location of the "Golden Hair" should have been announced to make the composition recognisable with certainty.

From an educational point of view these competitions are decidedly useful, especially when one learns for the first time that "Zampa" was the creation of Donizetti!



CORRESPONDENCE.

TO THE EDITOR.

THE ELECTRIC ORGAN.

SIR,—It is natural that a new system of organ-building and tone production forcing its way to the front with rapid strides should meet with opposition from certain parties. Correspondents in criticising should, however, adhere to the truth.

In your present issue Mr. Casson states that to effect transposition by a single switch is "an absolute impossibility." If he will meet me at

St. George's Church, Hanover-square, where one of our organs is being put up, I shall be pleased to convince him that what he describes as "an absolute impossibility" is easy of accomplishment.

Yours faithfully,

ROBT. HOPE-JONES.

Birkenhead.

July 16th, 1895.

[The above was received too late for insertion in our last issue.—ED.]

Our next number, which commences a new Volume, will contain some new features and novel Prize Competitions, Portrait and Biography of Sir Alexander Campbell Mackenzie, Mus. Doc., Principal of the Royal Academy of Music, and others, articles on "The Outlook for the Musical Profession," "How to make Orchestral Societies pay," "Immortality on Easy Terms," &c., &c. No one can afford to neglect seeing the October issue; it will be worth your while.



A MUSICAL MAGAZINE FOR EVERYBODY.

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LAST month we felt it our duty to remind our readers how easily they may be swindled in purchasing musical instruments, with, we are glad to say, some effect, for we have been already able to apprise purchasers as to firms and persons to be avoided. As we are absolutely independent of any individual, and are not specially enamoured of any particular make, any reader who cares to consult us by sending a stamped envelope can have forwarded our unbiassed opinion as to any maker's genuineness, and the address of a respectable dealer in his neighbourhood, who will deal fairly with him; this being sent in the interest of our readers and those of music dealers free of any charge.

Possessing a good instrument, the greatest care should be taken of it. The number of excellent pianos absolutely ruined by incompetent tuners is incredible. The scores of irresponsible persons who make a living by destroying pianos would not be, however, half so great as it is if people would only engage tuners through a well-known house instead of entrusting their instruments to any Dick, Tom or Harry who offers to tune at sixpence less than the regular man. As it is, most people don't find how they have been "done" until they offer their pianos for sale!

— * * * * *

SELF-CONTROL.—The habit of self-control is the repeated authority of the reason over the impulses, of the judgment over the inclinations, of the sense of duty over the desires. He who can govern him-

self intelligently has within him the source of all real happiness. The moral energy which he puts forth day by day increases by use, and becomes stronger and keener by exercise.

ADVANTAGES OF BLIND MUSICIANS OVER THEIR SEEING BRETHREN.

By W. H. HOLMES.

After reading an able, artistic, and instructive critique in the "Daily Telegraph" on the concert given by the Royal Normal College and Academy for the Blind, and the touching account of the sympathy of their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales *and their children*—setting a fashion, it is hoped (when also patronized by so many of the nobility and gentry), in the right direction—I feel emboldened to make a few remarks on the advantages the blind have over their "seeing" brethren in the study of music, and this I say by way of encouragement to all who are afflicted with blindness to persevere in their study of music, when they can but feel how many compensating powers are given to them for loss of sight, and in this particular department.

In the first place, the blind start with this advantage, they have to "enquire within" upon everything. Musicians know how necessary it is to the real cultivation of the musical soul to hear music in the mind's ear, apart from any instrument, and that those who feel the ideal have greater power over the actual. How often it is that those who can see neglect to cultivate the powers of hearing, understanding, and feeling; so that the four properties of the ear—first, the ear for tune; second, the ear for time; third, the ear for combinations; fourth, the ear for locality (or exact pitch)—are left comparatively dormant for want of being properly exercised. I do believe it is possible that the blind, being driven into themselves, may have a greater power of listening, understanding, and feeling more in music (as in another world) than even those who see; and I can but hope that at the Royal Normal College, with such aid as Mr. Fitz Hartvigson, Mr. Carl Deichmann, and, last but not least, Dr. Campbell, we may hear over and over again how their music grows.

I can fancy that the first great difficulty is beginning, but I doubt not that facilities of instruction in this direction may improve daily. After the first steps are got over I can fully understand what rapid progress the blind would make in music—real music. It is a good thing that the science of tuning is so much attended to in the Normal School. Tuning is no common occupation,

as every real musician will admit, dependent so much on a fine ear and a certain sort of mathematical skill. I remember a celebrated tuner in the Midland counties—the late Mr. Goltman, of Leicester—who could tune a pianoforte more rapidly than anyone I have known. He seemed to have such decision of ear that, after having tuned the pianoforte well in all its bearings, etc., he would, on hearing the most rapid passages played, detect any flaw, and at once discover the string or strings *quicker* than anyone who could see.

By far one of the most extraordinary things that a blind composer may do is giving the dictation (so difficult to give) to an amanuensis (as difficult, too, to take), making and educating the amanuensis to be a thorough musician. How a full score is thus written out—I have known one of our greatest musicians dictate a bassoon part (for instance, to one of Handel's compositions, when adding wind instrumental parts), and then not going down the score, so as to know the place of the bassoon part, but dictating the bassoon part separately and most rapidly. I do hope that there may be a discovery made, so that a blind composer could himself write down his own ideas, for with all the marvellous gift of memory which the blind in general so wonderfully possess, yet I have heard it most touchingly alluded to by a blind composer that, for want of an amanuensis at the moment, ideas had come and gone.

With regard to the executants amongst the blind it is not too much to say that they absorb the music in themselves; they create out of that which has been created by the composer's memory—may be almost said to assist feeling. In fact, I think the blind may become the greatest players and composers; and in these days when music is so advancing, greatly through the power of public instruction in the analytical programmes given at concerts, then listening to a performance with the knowledge thus acquired, and afterwards reading a well-written critique of the performance as it actually took place, England is fast becoming a musical nation, and as such we should do all in our power to assist our blind brethren, for assuredly they will eventually be able to assist their seeing compatriots.



WORK.—There is nothing more important for the safety and welfare of the individual, or for the safety and welfare of society, than that each man, woman and child should be educated to work, to love to work regularly and steadily, to do each his

work honestly and thoroughly, and to make such arrangements in the home and in society or in the business world that each one shall be provided with some sort of steady, honourable, useful work of hand or brain, or of both.

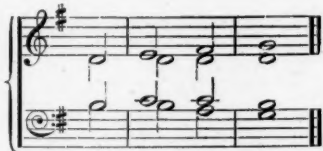
UNCOMMON CHORDS.

These are days when the professors are busier than they ever were before in teaching common chords, and the composers are equally busy in the endeavour to surpass each other in the production of uncommon chords. Now, as the professors, when they turn to practical composition, often furnish an abundant quota of uncommon chords, it is but natural they should sometimes be asked why they have not more to say about them to their pupils.

Perhaps you are thinking of Beethoven's saying about the advisability of "occasionally writing according to rule that we may hereafter come to what is contrary to rule." This is worth making a note of, especially the "hereafter;" but when (like Beethoven) you have studied the principles on which in the main our works of art have been produced, and are able (if rightly gifted) to be a law to yourself, it is only in very general terms that it is possible to give hints on the lines along which you may look for new developments.

A combination or progression may be unusual without violating any recognised rule. Thus, you would not often expect to meet four adjacent degrees on the diatonic scale sounded simultaneously, but it is possible to combine them so that they may be dwelt on with no bad effect.

How's that?



The combinations that can be made by passing notes in contrary motion are too obvious to quote, though if you get six simultaneous scale-passages crossing in parallel thirds and sixths some of the intermediate combinations would certainly have to be reckoned among the "things that it's better not to dwell upon."



This is quite according to rule; you might even (when the family is out of town) try a similar experiment with the chromatic scale. Consecutive dissonances in parallel motion are less frequent,

but there are plenty of examples of parallel sevenths, and parallel ninths can be introduced without breaking existing rules.

In the first measure of Chopin's much-enduring second nocturne you have a ninth which never reaches the octave, for the bass descends to a passing-note simultaneously with the resolution;

thus $\begin{matrix} F & E\flat \\ E\flat & D \end{matrix}$ (By the way, have you ever heard

that this piece was once a pianoforte solo, and that the popular setting for banjo and concertina is only the work of an enterprising adapter? Nor did the composer authorise the use of his name over the tune "Varsovia," in the "Twentieth Century Psalter."

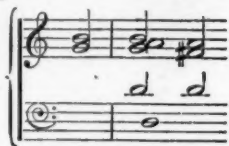


Such ninths can be used in slow time, but I even think I might challenge you to furnish an example of *three* consecutive ninths even in quick time. Beethoven, however, has shown us how it can be managed in two parts.



Startling effects are sometimes produced by the simultaneous use of notes that usually exclude each other; but here, too, the effect is sometimes much less harsh than might be expected. In the matter of combining a suspended discord with its note of resolution, mediæval composers, looking to the flow of the individual parts rather than to the resulting combinations, took more liberty than

modern ones. Such combinations, however, as Monteverde's



have never commended themselves to the taste of any age. It is possible to combine all the notes of the diatonic scale without any very harsh effect, but the notes that have an inherent tendency to quarrel must be kept out of each other's way—you must not show them both upstairs at once. Such combinations are often asked for at examinations; you will find different instances quoted in different text-books. Here is an unpublished one of my own, which did not disturb the equanimity of either performers or audience:—



A very striking instance of the simultaneous employment of six different notes is found in an organ toccata of J. S. Bach, which has been well described as "one of the most powerful suspensions in existence."



The modern use of pedal-notes has given rise to some very curious combinations. All the limitations of the older schools with regard to this class of notes are liable to exceptions. A clear modulation to a key to which the sustained note is altogether foreign is now admitted. Here is one instance: (you will find a varied assortment given by Dr. Prout, also by Mr. Corder, in Grove's):—



SCHUMANN.

Here the modulation is to a key not even related to those in which the pedal is tonic or dominant. Beethoven is peculiar in his use of the tonic, often sounding it close to the leading note that is to resolve on it. Here is a vocal illustration (I could give several instrumental ones):—

Mass in C.



One of the editors could not believe this was really intended, and took on himself to alter it. But besides pedals he has other curious combinations of tonic harmony with dominant. You have probably heard of the passage in the "Eroica" Symphony, which Herr Wagner, who was never accused of a false delicacy in the matter of combinations, wished to have altered for a "performing edition." Here is an equally strange mixture from his piano sonatas:—

Op. 81.



There was recently a correspondence in the musical papers about another passage, which it was said, probably rightly, needed correcting; but in the light of such instances as the above some hesitated to admit that Beethoven could not have written it as it stands.

Reverting for a moment to the subject of sustained notes we may remark that most extra-

ordinary effects must have been unwritten. Before the days of separate orchestral accompaniments instruments were mostly made in four sizes, corresponding to the different species of voice, so that they could perform the parts of the madrigals either with or without the voices. There is evidence that sometimes the parts were actually played on the bagpipes! Now, from the pictures of the pipes in *Virdung* we gather that the drones were not alike in all, but each had drones of a size (and therefore pitch) corresponding to its compass; the effect of a madrigal played on the bagpipes must therefore have been something to which even the author of "The Wedding of Shon McLean" could never have done justice.

You must remember that there is always a tendency to stretch the recognised formulæ of experience—this is all that an honest system of harmony can pretend to give—beyond the original limits. For a time we may patch up the broken formula by assuming ellipses, substitutions, and so on, but at last we have to admit the formula is hopelessly inadequate to the facts, and a new formula has to be accepted. But there will always be a certain residuum of more or less common usage, which has not been worked into the system. Modern melodies, for instance, particularly those with simple harmonisation, literally swarm with notes foreign to the harmony, for which no name has been found. What text-book, for instance, has a name for the note marked * in the following familiar extract?—



It does not belong to the harmony, which is clearly the tonic triad, and it does not agree with any described form of ornament. We may say the passage sounds ill, which is contrary to our senses,

or that it is exceptional, which is against our experience; or we may say it proves the text-book wrong; the text-book is only wrong in pretending to a completeness which is in the nature of the case impossible. If E followed in the next measure but one (a similar D sharp a few measures back is actually so followed) we might call the D sharp a passing-note; and the probability is that we have got so used to this phraseology that we are prepared to receive it without demanding the logical outcome of its presence. This principle, however, has been carried out in so many different ways at different periods that it seems hopeless to precisely define its limits. The only honest way in dealing with the student is to tell him plainly that besides the various ornamental notes, for the treatment of which rules have been found, there are others whose introduction must be left to his own judgment. We accept the individual facts, and wait patiently for the time when they can be gathered into new formulæ. By that time there will be other isolated facts waiting to be taken, for art will not stand still.

Finally, let us consider for a moment why you are interested in the subject of uncommon chords. Not, I trust, with a view to using those same chords yourself; they will prove intolerable at second-hand. Not with the idea of producing more startling eccentricities of your own; they were not originally written for their strangeness, but for their suitability to their special environment; the man who makes it his business to astonish the natives has abrogated the functions of an artist. The only justification of the study of unusual chords is that your view of the possibilities of harmony may insensibly be broadened by the experience thus gained. If you have originality it will assert itself by degrees as you become more facile in the handling of the ordinary material of music; if you have abandoned the idea of trying to produce novel effects you will find yourself producing them in spite of yourself. But true originality consists chiefly in that which cannot be catalogued or dissected; by a factitious eccentricity you will only destroy the merit your works might have had. Whether you are an original genius or not, your only hope of making the best of yourself is to profit by the formulated experience of those who have gone before you. It is better to be a genius than merely a master; but it is better to be a master than a charlatan.

B. A., Mus. D.

—*****—

HE who reflects too much will accomplish too little.

No man was ever discontented with the world who did his duty in it.

RESULT OF PRIZE COMPETITION.—No 18.

The task set was to identify the two quotations printed, and give the sources from which both were taken—chapter and verse.

—An examination of the replies sent in proved that the issue lay between "Corona" and "Sturm und Drang."

Both these gave all required particulars, and, following our usual custom when a tie occurs,

we award the prize to the former. The winner's name and address is—

CHARLES SKAIF,
63 Salisbury Road,
Wavertree,
Liverpool,

to whom a Cheque for One Guinea has been sent. The two extracts are printed below:—

FROM BEETHOVEN'S VIOLIN CONCERTO.



FROM MENDELSSOHN'S "ST. PAUL."

TENOR VOICES.

O be gra-cious ye im-mor-tals, O be gra-cious ye im-mor-tals. &c.

ORCH.

The likeness between the two phrases is very marked, and, as "Sturm und Drang" remarks: "It is difficult to avoid believing that this passage was unconsciously suggested to Mendelssohn by the passage above quoted from Beethoven's Con-

certo. The striking modulation to the major common chord on the leading note occurs in both, and the general resemblance is very close allowing for the difference of medium—the voice in one case, the strings alone in the other.



THE GREAT MAN.—Emerson, arguing for sincerity in action, says, "What I must do is all that concerns me, not what people think. This rule, equally arduous in actual and intellectual life, may serve for the whole distinction between greatness and meanness. It is the harder, because you always find

those who think they know what is your duty better than you know it. It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after your own; but the great man is he who, in the midst of a crowd, keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude."

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THE LAW OF RIGHT.—When the peasant mother sees one of her careless children fall into a ditch, her first proceeding is to pull him out; her second is to box his ears; her third, ordinary, to lead him carefully a little way by the hand, or send him home for the rest of the day. The child usually cries, and very often would clearly prefer remaining in the ditch; and if he understood any of the terms of politics, would certainly express resentment at the interference with his individual liberty; but the mother has done her duty. Whereas the usual call of the mother nation to any of her children, under such circumstances, has lately been nothing more than the fox-hunter's "Stay still there, I shall clear you." And if we

always *could* clear them, their requests to be left in muddy independence might be sometimes allowed by kind people, or their cries for help disdained by unkind ones. But we can't clear them. The whole nation is, in fact, bound together, as men are by ropes on a glacier—if one falls the rest must either lift him or drag him along with them as dead weight, not without much increase of danger to themselves, and the law of right being manifestly this—as, wheiher manifestly or not, it is always the law of prudence—the only question is, how this wholesome help and interference are to be administered. The first interference should be in education.—*Ruskin*.

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